IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of friction stir welding together at least two metallic workpieces, including the step of applying at or adjacent a heated welding zone a cryogen in the form of at least one jet; thereby reducing tensile stresses in said welding zone and creating compressive stresses in said welding zone.

2. (original) The method claimed in Claim 1, in which the cryogen is a liquid cryogen.

3. (original) The method claimed in Claim 2, in which the liquid cryogen is nitrogen.

4. (original) The method claimed in Claim 2, in which the liquid cryogen is argon.

5. (original) The method claimed in Claim 1, in which the cryogen is solid carbon dioxide.

6. (original) The method claimed in Claim 1, in which the cryogen is a mixture of solid carbon dioxide and a liquid cryogen.

7. (original) The method claimed in Claim 1 wherein the workpieces are of aluminium or an aluminium alloy.